SEALIFT

JUNE 1973

Past Bright, Future Uncertain

In this issue of Sealift are three stories that I would like to briefly comment upon. First is the report on awards presented to Capt. Lawrence Nasset and Chief Engineer Don McKee, both of the USNS Taluga.

They—and the entire crew of the Taluga—have done an outstanding job in the past year. Their performance in providing underway replenishment support to the Navy's Seventh Fleet is one of the primary reasons why MSC is getting two new tankers for manning and operation by Civil Service crews. All of us in MSC owe a debt to the Taluga master, chief engineer and crew for their pioneering efforts—efforts which resulted in the Navy assignment of an expanded fleet support mission to this command.

Second is the story which reports on a special award being given the crew of the USNS Huntsville for a heroic sea rescue of 12 survivors of the Fiona C. after that ship was engulfed by fire at sea. Their alert and courageous efforts in behalf of their fellow mariners honor all MSC seamen and members of the command, and are typical of the professionalism of all MSC seafarers.

The third story falls into a different category. It recounts the changing situation we face today. I think my remarks to the special subcommittee of the House Committee on Armed Services pretty much tell the story.

As I told committee members when I appeared before them May 18, MSC had 114 government owned ships in its nucleus fleet in June 1972. Today we have only 86. We have laid up government owned ships, and we have returned chartered ships we did not need to their owners. The reason is obvious—declining military sealift requirements resulting from our withdrawal from Vietnam.

We may lay up even more ships. The problem we face is difficult. On one hand, we have the challenge of maintaining a force which can meet the demands of any forseeable contingency. On the other, we are charged with providing peacetime sea transportation for the entire Department of Defense in the most economical and effective manner.

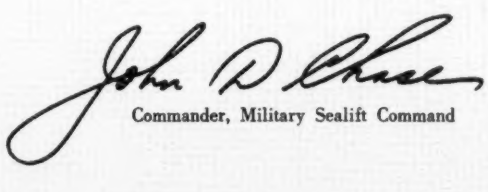
As of now, our work force is relatively stable. Although we have laid up ships, we have been able to offer most of the crewmen involved other jobs—even though at a lower rate of pay in some instances. Many of our most experienced people have decided to retire.

But, past realignment of our organization does not mean that further reductions in numbers of ships—and of jobs ashore and afloat—will not be necessary. Our sealift requirements for the next fiscal year are only 50 per cent of the requirements we fulfilled in Fiscal Year 1969, the peak year of cargo movement to Southeast Asia.

The long term picture is, at best, uncertain. While I would like to assure each of you that MSC will operate X number of ships and have a specific number of people assigned in the near future, that is impossible. It is impossible because the support requirements assigned to this command are a product of many things, of the world situation, of U.S. foreign policy, of the policies and actions of other nations, and the amount of money authorized by Congress for Defense operations. In short, we are a responsive command which has been, is, and must be structured so that we can react immediately, effectively and economically to future demands.

Within that framework, we simultaneously will do all that we can to promote the welfare and security of our most vital asset, the expertise which is represented by on-board members of Military Sealift Command.

Those are our objectives and I can assure each of you that we will attempt to attain all of them as we reshape the Defense sealift force which is represented by Military Sealift Command.



Commander, Military Sealift Command

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How do you fight a war without firing a shot? Attend LOGEX-73 and help develop

Contingency capability

photos and story
by
Howard L. Rosenberg

Far from the battlefield, in an old World War II training camp nestled in the hills of Virginia, a major war recently was planned and fought without firing a shot. The place was Camp Pickett, Virginia, an hour and a half's drive south from Richmond. Engaged in battle were 30 officers and one enlisted man of the U.S. Navy ready reserve, about 8,000 Army reservists, one reserve Marine lieutenant colonel and five Air Force reserve officers.

The war was Logex–73, an annual logistics exercise designed to probe the problems and to develop solutions for supply of a fighting force operating thousands of miles away. The exercise took place during the month of May as two groups of inter-service reservists met at Camp Pickett for consecutive two-week wars.

Rear Adm. John D. Chase was given the task of providing the Navy people for the exercise by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Elmo Zumwalt. The entire group was made up of Navy reservists from Military Sealift Command and Naval Control of Shipping Offices, which are directed by Admiral Chase as a member of the CNO staff.

The exercise was designed to aquaint the officers with tasks that would challenge them in a wartime situation. It was also a working preview of a new program to recruit officers of the merchant marine into a new Naval Reserve program. Expertise of the merchant marine officers, who now can hold Navy reserve commissions as part of a new CNO approved program will help to resolve problems similar to those faced by the Navy reservists during this exercise. The Naval Control of Shipping Organization routes ships and MSC delivers supplies moved by sea to Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force units in a war.

WELCOME: Rear Adm. Chase arrives at Camp Pickett airport for a day-long visit.

The mythical war ostensibly was taking place in Western Europe. Problems presented ranged from how to support a surprise attack by Marine divisions, without it being no surprise to the 'enemy,' to how to deliver a shipload of badly needed supplies to an Army force when the

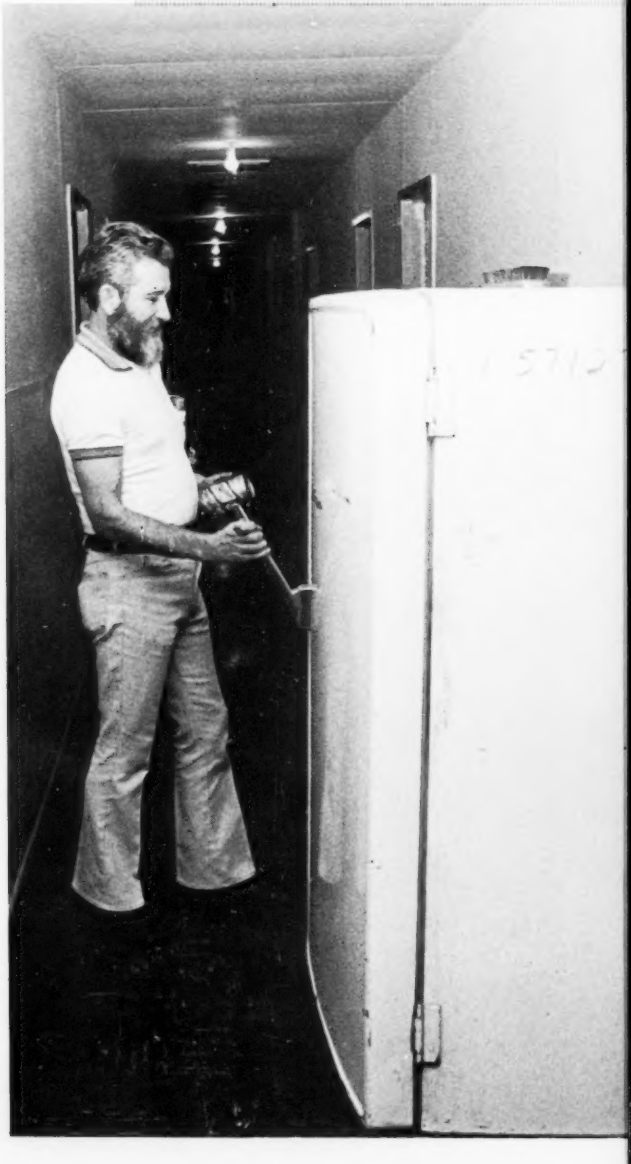
June 1973

STAFF MEETING: It's 4 p.m. and time to go over the day's events.

SNAIL PROBLEM: Cmdr. Donald Fleshman was plagued by an infestation of snails on one of his ships.

STOWING: Lt. Cmdr. William Collins, a doctoral student in civilian life, straightens up his quarters.

REFRESHMENT: The refrigerator in the officers' quarters was well-stocked.



WELL, IT WAS THIS WAY: Lt. Cmdr. Richard Halferty explains a problem during a staff meeting.

mayor of a port city will not let the ship dock because it is infested with snails?

The men who devised such problems referred to themselves as the 'hee hee hee' bunch. After racking their brains, they often convulsed in laughter—having devised yet another impossible problem for the logisticians to contend with. Amazingly enough, problems proved to be solvable, for the most part, and the exercise players who developed the solutions proved to be an exceptional group.

Navy reservists came from as far as Seattle, Washington to participate in the exercise. None of them knew the others. Many had no experience in the field of logistic support. Yet, they banded together to form an incredibly cohesive and effective force. Their effectiveness could be attributed to a 'can-do' attitude, plus the skills they brought with them from their civilian occupations and prior Navy experience.

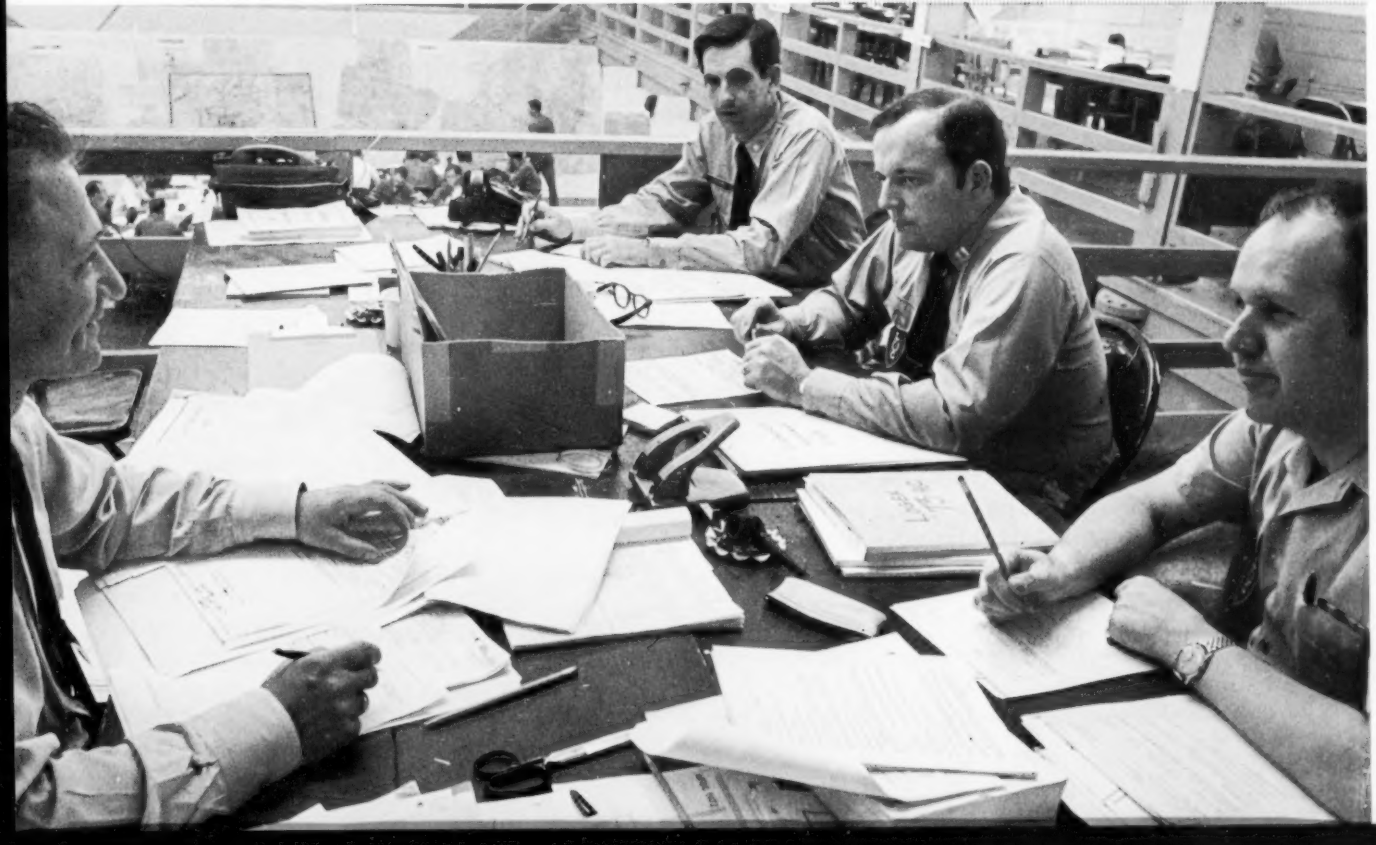
The Navy reservist is a specie unique to the military. He considers active duty every year to be a two-week vacation, and often serves without pay, considering his Navy job a labor of love. Well-trained and respected throughout Navy ranks, he is anxious to prove his worth to national security.

It is virtually impossible to find a typical Navy reservist, but it is equally hard to find one not willing to speak openly and at length on what the reserve means to him.

Lt. Cmdr. Ralph Bunje is an accountant from Foster City, California. "The reserve is an essential organization and it could, perhaps, use some additional support. It can develop meaning and with the cutback on the active forces the reserve will be taking on even greater importance." Commander Bunje served as Military Sealift Command's liason with the Army during the exercise. His role was to handle communication between the Navy and the Army to help assure success of the exercise. He did a good job. Two groups who had never worked together before produced a lot of problems to iron out. Organizational charts and terminology had to be made understandable for both sides. Commander Bunje managed, though presented with words and titles he never had come across before during his Navy career.

Cmdr. Vernon C. Palmer seemed perfectly comfortable in his role as commander of Eastern Atlantic subarea. He is an old hand on commercial logistic matters. Palmer served many years as second mate and navigator

PROBLEM POSERS: Controllers devised the problems. Clockwise from left, Lt. Cmdr. Leo Spano, Cmdr. Al Guizerix, Lt. George Merrill and Lt. Cmdr. Gilbert Quackenbush.



on ships owned by the Pope and Talbot Shipping Co., sailing from San Francisco to Fiji, New Zealand and China, prior to World War II.

He now is a division head at the Maritime Administration researching the possibility of making the Great Lakes the nation's fourth seacoast. He envisions the future of the merchant marine as "quite exciting." He believes that the merchant marine is getting a finer breed of merchant sailor, who see a future in the industry. "Progress has come from all the fighting and squabbles in the early days of unionization. The old timers planted the seeds and the young men are reaping the harvest."

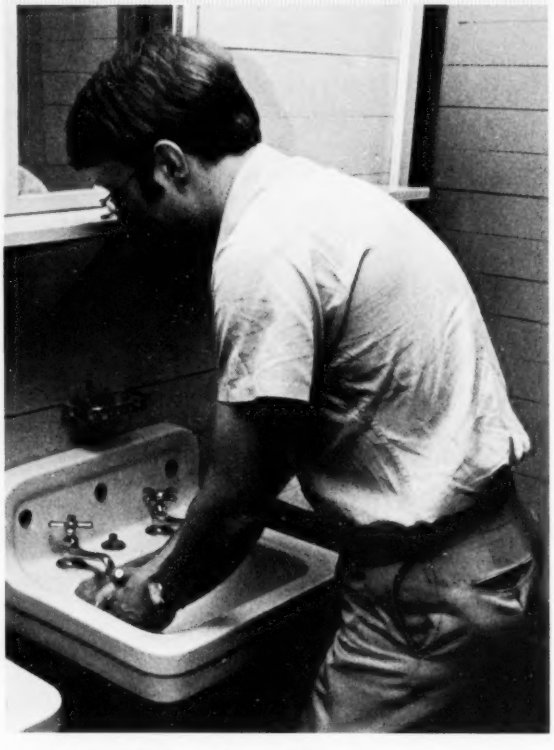
Another atypical—typical Navy reservist was Lt. George Freyer of Seattle, Washington. An insurance salesman in civilian life, Lieutenant Freyer feels the reserves are at a turning point, with a bright future. "The atmosphere in the country has changed a lot toward the military with the increases in salary and the elimination of the draft. With the cutbacks in the active forces, it is increasingly difficult to maintain a large standing Army or Navy, and it is very fortunate that we have the reserve, a reasonable alternative." Commander Bunje added, "It's not so much that what we learn in the reserves is so valuable as that it is the acquisition by the Navy of our civilian skills." "Reservists are capable of improvising. They are not wedded to military dogma. You may not have a lot of people capable of commanding a destroyer, but you have a lot who know how to manage and organize, which the Navy always needs."

Lt. Clemson Page, a newspaper reporter from Philadelphia, agreed. "As Navy people, I think we have a little less orthodoxy and we have the tools to be a bit more creative." He added, "Whether we win or lose this thing (the imaginary war), we're learning a hell of a lot."

The idea of learning also was echoed by a number of officers including Lt. Cmdr. James R. Stephens of Decatur, Ga., an architect. "We haven't really seen the relationship between all these logistic functions in the past. You get a better picture of the total scheme of things and learn how your particular function fits into the whole." Lieutenant Page added, "I really believe that by the time the two weeks is over, I will know more about the Military Sealift Command and Naval Control of Shipping Organization (NCSORG) than I have learned in the past two years at an NCSORG office. Naval Control of Shipping Organization is 90 per cent staffed by Navy reservists, and we must know what to do in the event of a war. We're certainly learning here."

Predominant attitude during the exercise was one of eagerness. The officers were interested in what they were doing and anxious to help carry the ball. They also seemed to be having fun. One commented, "This kind of thing is a good time. Hell, it's two weeks away from my job and forget about the emergencies and problems that are always coming up. It's a good way to unwind from the pressures of home. It's an adventure."

CHOW TIME: Lt. Stephen Heinrich cleans up for dinner.



An adventure indeed. Other things contributed to the men's willingness to be a part of the reserves. One lieutenant commander said, "There's also that $140 bucks a month. It's very useful cash!" And another injected. "There's the retirement program. I was a stockbroker before I was an accountant, and the only retirement programs I have are Social Security and the Naval Reserve. The retirement check in the reserve will equal my Social Security income; so, it's like getting two Social Security checks!"

All in all, the exercise would have to be termed a success. Lt. Cmdr. Gilbert Quackenbush, one of the controllers, who in civilian life heads the container division at MSC headquarters, summed it up. "This is about as close as you can get to duplicating the real situation. It is particularly important that the Navy continue to participate in this type of exercise because the Army has had little contact with the merchant marine in day by day training. If all sides can get together, they soon realize that close liaison is needed at every level."

Incidentally, both wars were lost. But, no matter. To paraphrase Lieutenant Page: It's not so much whether we win or lose, it's how we played the game. And how much we learned while playing it. □

Fleet support role enlarging, cargo ships heading for lay-up as

MSC realigns its force

by
Ed Nurenberg

Signing of the ceasefire and withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam have had a great impact on the lives of many people, including employees of Military Sealift Command.

During the war, from 1965 through 1972, MSC delivered more than 85.7 million measurement tons of military supplies, gear and equipment in Southeast Asia—and moved another 16 million long tons of petroleum products.

Following the ceasefire, sealift requirements were sharply cut. Only replacement material authorized under the ceasefire agreement now moves into Vietnam—plus material needed by the peacemaking forces. Lessened requirements have had a direct impact on the MSC fleet of ships, government owned and chartered, and upon the size of the command's seagoing work force. Government owned ships have been taken out of operation, and chartered ships returned to their owners. Some Civil Service seamen have retired, with others being reassigned to different MSC vessels—some just coming into service as the result of a new role given the command, support of the Navy combatant fleets.

MSC's government owned fleet included 86 ships in early June. Thirty were special project ships, including those used in oceanographic research and space flight programs. Thirteen LSTs were still in the inventory. Although 26 cargo ships were on the books, only 21 of these were in full operating status. Without cargo to move, there is no need to have ships at sea. And cargo requirements are down. In Fiscal Year 1969, peak year of Vietnam support, MSC sealift expenditures were $1.3 billion. In Fiscal Year 1972, they were $900 million with estimates for the next fiscal year only $500 million. Projected global sealift requirements for the next fiscal year are less than 50 per cent of those for 1969.

By mid July, 10 government owned cargo ships are to be taken out of active service according to Rear Adm. John D. Chase, MSC commander.

"Projected requirements demand that we reduce the size of our active fleet of government owned ships. Ships slated for disposal are all older vessels with mechanical problems normally associated with World War II vintage ships," the admiral said.

MSC already has removed 16 tank landing ships from operational control of MSC, Far East. The last two troop ships operated by MSC, USNS Barrett and Upshur, are gone and the USNS Bondia and Gammon have been advertised for sale.

In the process of layup in the Far East are USNS Cheyenne, Provo, and Phoenix. All three are 27 years old and have been used for intra-area sealift in Southeast Asia waters. MSC, Far East, also will lose the USNS Herkimer and USNS Muskingum, each 28 years old, and the USNS Short Splice, built 27 years ago.

MSC, Atlantic has lost the USNS Boyce, built in 1945, and the USNS Craig, also a 28-year-old veteran, with Pacific area command disposing of the USNS Perseus and USNS Asterion. Both are refrigerated stores ships. Perseus was launched in 1945, and the Asterion in 1944.

The picture might appear to be bleak as far as employment matters are concerned. However, "this is not now the case," said Joseph E. Butler, director of MSC's employment division.

"Even with the ships we've already laid up, we've been able to offer our seagoing personnel jobs on other MSC fleet vessels," said Butler. "With the seven new ships MSC will acquire, we'll have 609 seagoing billets which will have to be filled."

Mr. Butler referred to three cable layers, two fleet ocean tugs and two oilers which will come under MSC control between July 1 and November 1973. All are currently operated by the Navy fleets.

Cable ships Thor, Aeolus, and Neptune will eventually become part of MSC's special project fleet. Thor and Aeolus both were commissioned in 1945 after being constructed as attack cargo ships. Shortly after they were built, they were put in the reserve fleet. In the mid 1950s

OFF CALIFORNIA: The fleet oiler Passumpsic is due to join the MSC fleet in late July.

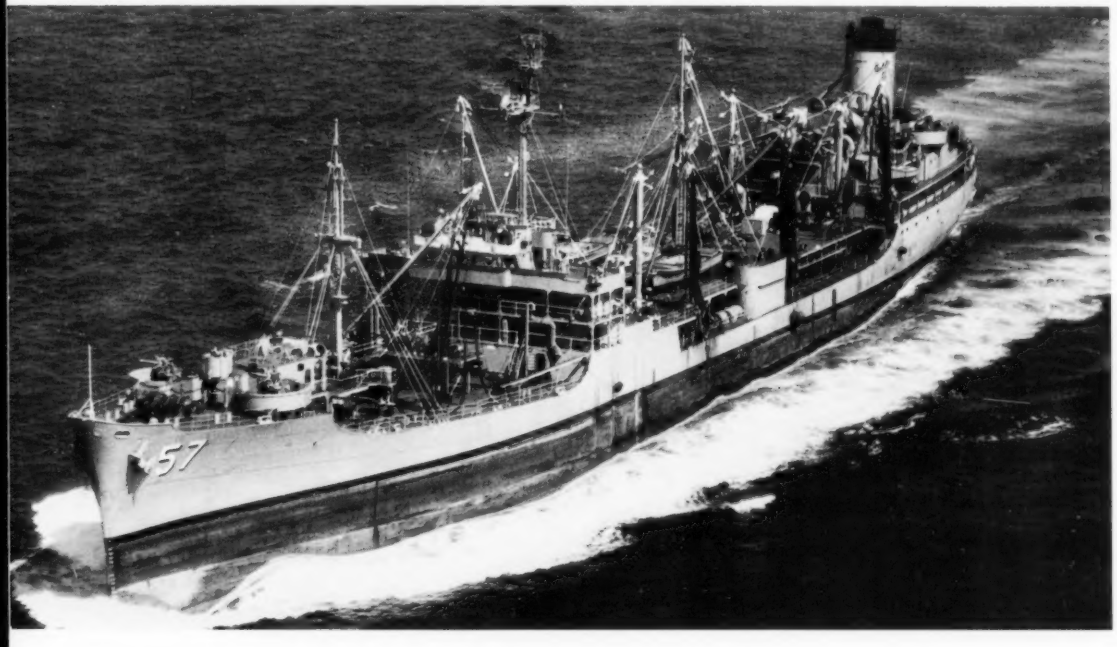
AERIAL VIEW: The Marias, a fleet oiler, will join the MSC fleet in October.

DEPARTING: The refrigerated stores ship USNS Asterion is to be dropped from the MSC active ship inventory.

they were reconfigured for Navy operation as cable repair ships.

The Neptune, sister ship of the USNS Albert J. Myer, was built in 1945. This ship is fitted with electric cable handling machinery—in place of the usual steam system—and helicopter landing pad. All three cable ships will perform assignments for the Naval Electronics Systems Command.

The two fleet tugs are of the Apache class. The Mosopelea was built in 1945 and the Lipan in 1942. Their MSC assignments will be generally the same salvage and towing work they have been doing.



The oilers, Passumpsic and Marias, will follow in the wake of the USNS Taluga which has been providing underway replenishments and fuel transfers for combat ships of the Seventh Fleet for the past year. The three civilian manned tankers, operating in a fleet support role, can save the Navy as much as $81 million and nearly 4,000 military billets over the next four years.

Passumpsic, an Indian word meaning clear running water, is a veteran of both the Vietnam and Korean conflicts. She will join the MSC fleet July 24. Marias, capable of carrying 145,000 barrels of fuel, will be assigned to MSC next October. Each will have a military communications detachment of one naval officer and 15 bluejackets, and each will be manned by approximately 105 Civil Service mariners.

The MSC picture, at this time, is not in clear focus. That's not unexpected since the end of the war in Vietnam was certain to mean reduced requirements for a command as heavily involved as MSC.

To date, several trends are evident. First is that reduction of worldwide requirements demands lay-up of some ships, and return of chartered ships. "We will depend even more heavily than in the past," Admiral Chase recently told his staff, "on scheduled liners to move military cargo."

As ships are laid up, the work force structure also is being altered. To date, however, there have been no mass reductions in force—and none are expected in the immediate future. That situation is the result of several factors, among them a normal 25 percent turnover in ship's personnel at the end of each voyage—especially during summer months.

Addition of ships to meet MSC's fleet support role is creating new billets for seamen leaving ships being laid up. While, in some cases, pay rates are lower, most who wanted jobs have been offered jobs by the MSC area commands. Heavy retirements in June also have helped stabilize the employment situation, as has a reduction in the number of temporary MSC jobs. At the present time, MSC area commands are actively recruiting, particularly for some skills, with union halls not always able to provide needed seamen.

However, the longer-term future is less certain as Admiral Chase points out in his message on Page 2. Declining requirements may well cause further reductions in the MSC ship inventory—and in the size of the work force.

The situation is not yet clear, and won't be until military requirements stabilize, and until decisions are made as to what type and how many fleet support ships MSC can expect to be assigned. □

EMPTY

STOP, READ, HEE

ONE WAY . . .CAUTION . . . YIELD . . .DANGER . . . HIGH VOLTAGE . . . SLOW . . . DEER CROSSING . . . WATCH FOR FALLING ROCKS . . . HILL . . . NO SHOULDER . . . SINGLE LANE . . . DIVIDED HIGHWAY . . . SCHOOL . . . BLIND INTERSECTION . . . STOP.

Stop and look around. Everywhere, signs tell us what to do, where to go and what to be wary of. Signs explain when, how and why to do nearly everything involved in transporting ourselves or our possessions. The signs are there for a reason, our own safety. By obeying the signs, we have a better chance of getting where we want to go without becoming involved in a serious if not fatal accident.

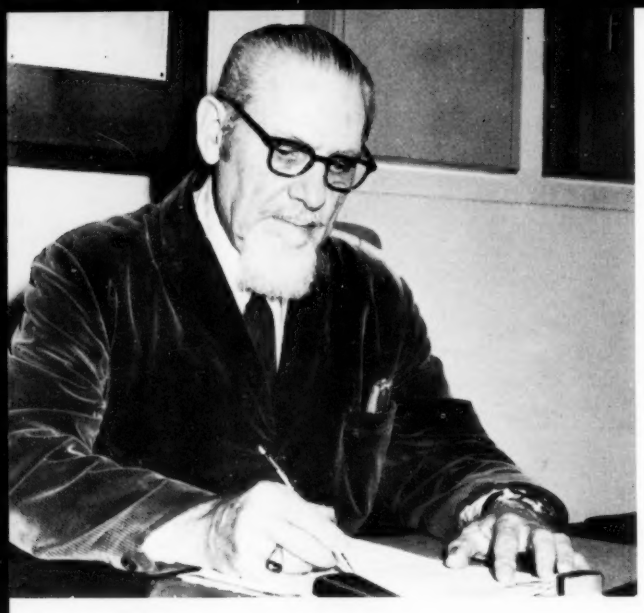
The shipping industry is no exception. Rules and regulations for the safe shipment of materials are almost innumerable. The transportation industry long has sought a consolidation of signs concerning hazardous materials into a uniform, international code. Now it has one.

On February 27, the United States Department of Transportation adoped United Nations labels for shipment of hazardous materials. This regulation changes almost every label now in use for both domestic and export shipments, by air, land and sea.

The labels designate the hazard by color, drawings and words. No matter what language we speak, it is virtually impossible to not recognize the sign for explosives, for instance. The label is a yellow diamond with the word explosive emblazoned across its center and a graphic illustration of an explosion at the top.

Other labels identify flammable liquids, gas and solids, poisons, oxidizers, irritants, corrosives and radioactive materials.

Keep an eye out for them, and what they say. □



Half a century of service

To most men, completing 32 years, six months and 22 days of Navy service would be a time to hang it up and retire. It would be a chance to settle down on that chicken farm, travel, raise flowers or do anything that left a lot of time to relax in the sun on a river with a fishing pole.

However, Thomas E. Bennett didn't do that. On Jan. 1, 1956 he retired from the Navy with 32 years behind him. Three days later, he went to work in the supply department of Military Sealift Command, Far East, in Yokohama. He was a bit disgruntled that it took the command three days to process his employment application. It broke his government service time.

On June 1, he will celebrate 50 years of government employment, a goal not many Civil Service workers reach.

The 65-year-young Far East employee from Brooklyn, New York, joined the Navy May 29, 1923. He went through recruit training at the U.S. Naval Training Station, Newport, Rhode Island, then attended pharmacist's mate school at Portsmouth, Virginia. He spent his naval career in the medical field.

Bennett has served on battleships, hospital ships, a troop transport during World War II and an ammunition ship during the Korean War. His naval career took him all over the world and he can speak with authority about liberty in Shanghai and other ports in China before World War II.

"It was a different Navy then," Bennett said. "There weren't so many people and there was more of an esprit de corps. When a ship or a shore command took on a project, it was an all hands operation. Everyone was interested because it was their unit and they were proud of it."

He has served at naval hospitals throughout the United States, spent three years at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Canacao, Philippines, across the bay from Manila, and during World War II, served at Guadalcanal, Tinian and Guam. During the war, he was commissioned an ensign and attained the rank of full lieutenant before reverting to chief petty officer in 1947. He retired as a lieutenant in the hospital corps.

Prior to his retirement, he served with U.S. Naval Forces, Japan, when that command was located in Tokyo. He next moved to the U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, and spent his final tour of duty at the U.S. Naval Air Facility, Oppama, Japan, where his retirement ceremony was held.

During his naval career, Bennett was commended several times by his commanding officers. In his early Navy years, he was involved in two disasters. He was part of the medical force at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital that handled casualties following an explosion at the Naval Ammunition Depot in Dover, New Jersey, and the sinking of the submarine USS S51.

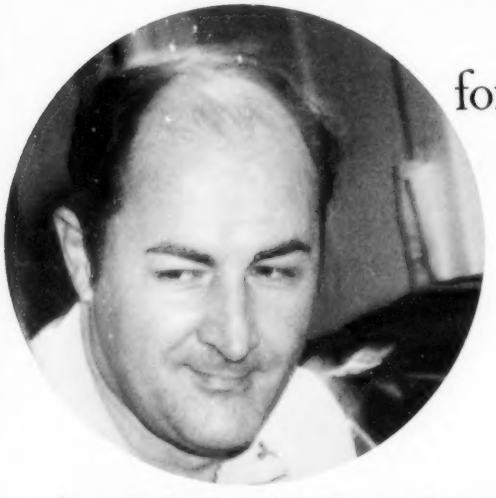
While serving aboard the repair ship USS Vestal in 1928, he saved two crewmen from drowning at Hi Catal Beach in Cuba. During World War II, he was lauded for rescue work during a typhoon that nearly destroyed the naval hospital on Guam and he was commended for duties performed as chief master at arms at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, Illinois.

Among mementos of his Navy career is a certificate of satisfactory service as a lieutenant, signed by Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, and a certificate of service signed by President Harry S. Truman.

For the past 17 years, Bennett has worked as a supply technician for Military Sealift Command, Far East. He ensures that ships arriving at North Pier in Yokohama receive supplies, spare parts and other equipment they order prior to arriving in port.

He has no immediate plans for retirement and intends to stay on the job at the sealift command for at least another year. When he does decide it is time to sit back and take things easy, he and his wife Kin, who presently reside in Yokohama, will settle in Hilo, Hawaii. □

Kudos



for McKee and Nasset

"Outstanding performance, well done, excellent" are just some of the terms used when Navy people talk about MSC's USNS Taluga, a former fleet oiler, now providing underway replenishment for Seventh Fleet ships. Taluga has racked up more than 250 underway refuelings, from Singapore to Sasebo, without missing a commitment.

New kudos have been received by the ship's master and chief engineer. Capt. Lawrence O. Nasset was presented the Distinguished Civilian Service Award, highest honor the Secretary of the Navy can bestow on a civilian, while Chief Engineer Donald K. McKee was presented the Navy Superior Service Award.

This is not the first time in the winner's circle for either of the U.S. Civil Service mariners. They also shared the MSC, Pacific award as command employees of the year.

The latest awards were presented by Rear Adm. Donithan B. Shelton, commander of U.S. Naval Forces, Philippines, in ceremonies June 15 at Subic Bay. Admiral Shelton made the presentations in behalf of Rear Adm. John D. Chase, MSC commander.

The Taluga, which Captain Nasset has skippered since May 1972, has been involved for the past year in a program known as Charger Log II. Conceived by Chief of Naval Operations Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., it has been a year-long test of ability of a civilian-crewed ship to support Navy combatant vessels—providing underway refueling to all types of Navy ships.

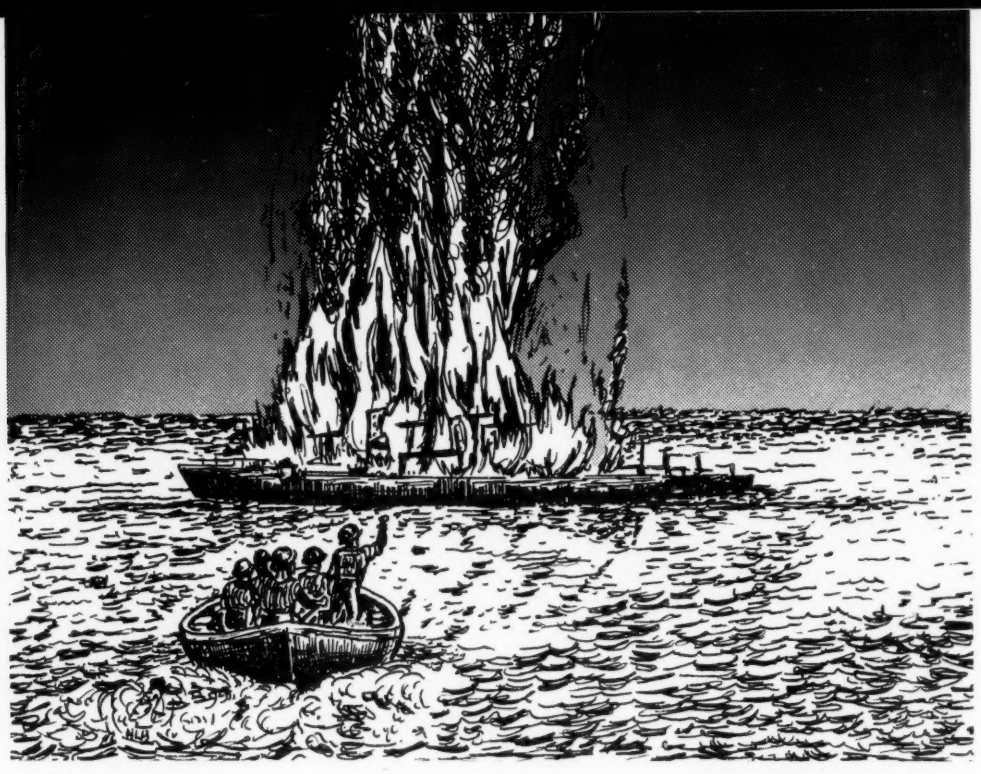
Captain Nasset, Chief Engineer McKee and the Taluga crew of 105 Civil Service mariners are also Vietnam veterans. In November 1972, Taluga was deployed for an extended period to provide underway replenishment for Navy ships operating in the South China Sea. More than 160 combat ships were replenished by Taluga during round-the-clock operations in the waters of Vietnam. Adm. Philip P. Cole, commander of Service Group Three, Taluga's operational commander during this period, expressed his opinion of Captain Nasset's performance in a letter dated Jan. 2, 1973 when he stated: "a most capable and enlightened person who is striving to make Taluga the best oiler in the fleet."

Chief Engineer McKee was cited for his efforts in keeping the Taluga on the line. While the ship was on her many replenishment missions McKee continually overhauled pumps, boilers and other major components, enabling Taluga to maintain a rigid schedule without having to return to port for repairs.

Vice Adm. James L. Holloway, commander of the Seventh Fleet, recently wired his congratulations to Nasset and McKee saying, "We of the Seventh Fleet have admired the outstanding performance of Taluga and her crew under Captain Nasset's able leadership. Taluga's many line swings into the Gulf of Tonkin in support of combatant ship operations proved the feasibility of the Charger Log program by providing fleet support when and where needed."

Admiral Chase echoed Admiral Holloway's message, noting that the awards "were both a testimony to the effective leadership and technical ability of the two officers—and a testimony to the skill and seamanship of the 105-man civilian crew which has manned the Taluga for the past year. They are real pros, and the successes they have achieved have helped insure that MSC will play an even larger fleet support role in the future."

Captain Nasset and Chief Engineer McKee don't plan to rest on their laurels. Both are to be assigned to the USNS Passumpsic, another Navy fleet oiler that will be taken over by MSC on July 24 for operation in the same manner as Taluga. □



Fiona C, a commercial cargo vessel, was burning on the horizon. In rough, choppy seas the USNS Huntsville came to her

Rescue at sea

by
Howard L. Rosenberg

The date was Jan. 25, 1972. The time, 4:25 on a clear, dark, starlit morning. Second Officer Erastus W. Archer was walking the bridge aboard the USNS Huntsville. His hot coffee stung his tongue as he sipped carefully, a couple of drops spilling out and splashing soundlessly to the deck. Second Officer Archer had assumed the 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. watch just a few minutes earlier. It was a routine assignment for the veteran mariner; he had stood watch on many uneventful nights. This night was to be an exception.

As he scanned the horizon, Archer could just make out a ship burning on the horizon about five miles away. In the next few minutes he saw three passenger liners pass within two miles of the burning vessel.

Second Officer Archer notified the radio officer, Rex Reeves, who immediately radioed the U.S. Coast Guard in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and was startled to learn that his message was the first report the Coast Guard had on the burning ship. The Huntsville crew was immediately awakened as the general alarm was sounded and the public address system boomed an order to ready the number two motor boat.

This was the scene that early January morning as the Fiona C., a commercial cargo vessel, was engulfed in flames and bobbed helplessly on the rough, choppy seas. The entire crew of 12 men from the Fiona C. was picked up by a rescue boat from Huntsville within the hour.

For the heroic actions of her crew, the Huntsville will receive the Special Sea Rescue Award jointly sponsored by the American Institute of Merchant Shipping (AIMS) and the Marine Section of the National Safety Council. Ship safety achievement awards are conferred on American-flag ships which perform outstanding feats such as rescue at sea, or demonstrate outstanding safety training which contributes to saving lives or a ship. The awards are given for a total ship effort rather than for individual achievement.

In a letter announcing the award to Rear Adm. John D. Chase, commander of Military Sealift Command,

FIRST TRY: Third Officer Jarrel F. Register commanded the motor boat searching for survivors and was the first to spot them

HUNTSVILLE MASTER: Capt. Gottfried C. Krull.

BUSY MAN: First Officer Guido Nicastro was kept busy dropping and picking up anchors, launching boats and seeing that survivors came aboard.

James J. Reynolds, the president of AIMS said, "The safety awards judging committee comprised of maritime industry, Maritime Administration and Coast Guard officials, felt the USNS Huntsville was exceptionally well qualified to win the award." He continued by lauding the ship's effort saying, "The rescue was especially significant since three cruise ships had passed nearby the disabled vessel and, yet, offered no assistance. Certainly, the action of the USNS Huntsville and her crew represents an outstanding seafaring achievement which reflects credit on all associated with the U.S. maritime industry."

Credit where credit is due. It was a night of heroic actions by men who were 'just doing their job.'

Third Officer Jerrel F. Register commanded the rescue boat as they made four passes on the Huntsville's side of the Fiona C. The rescue boat was unable to get closer than three or four hundred yards off the burning ship as flames billowed out of the quarters on the stern and explosions rocked the vessel.

The rescue team had nearly given up hope since there was no sign of life on the vessel. The Fiona C. started drifting away from the Huntsville rescuers as Third Officer Register spotted a blinking light starboard of his boat. He turned the rescue boat and proceeded toward the light. Within a hundred yards of a small boat and raft holding the survivors, the rescue boat's motor died. Able Seaman William H. Paczoch led a group of men to a work boat which was launched to assist the rescuers.

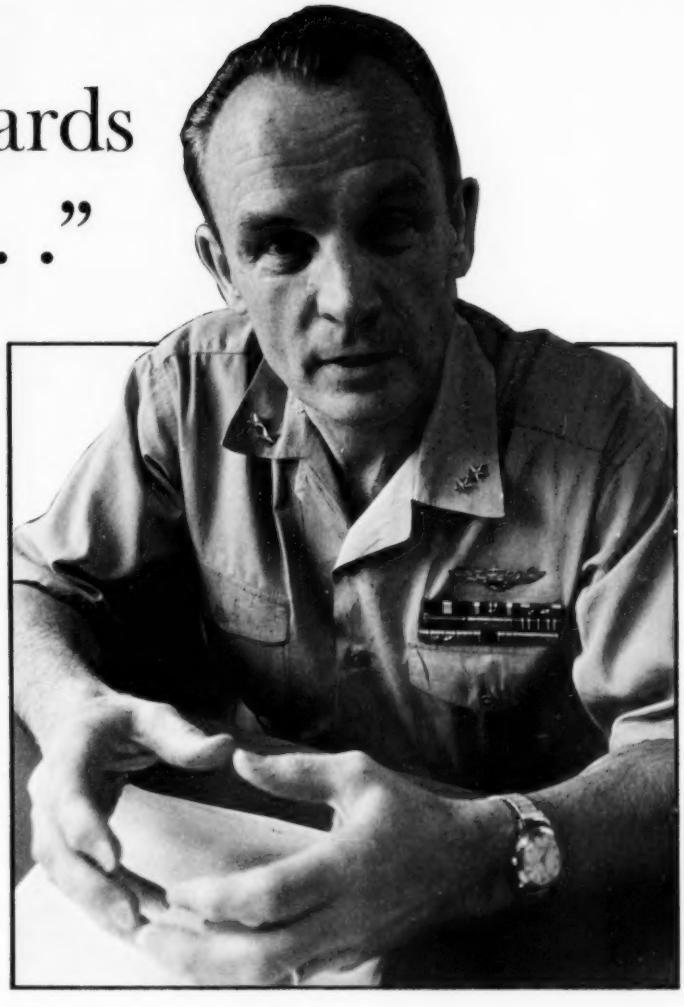
The work boat picked up the entire crew of 12 men from the Fiona C., attached a tow to the rescue boat and made for the Huntsville. Safe aboard the MSC ship, the crew of Fiona C. relaxed, drank coffee and donned dry clothes offered by the Hunstville crew.

Finally, First Officer Guido Nicastro could rest too. He had been a very busy man during the whole operation, launching boats, dropping and picking up anchors and seeing that survivors came aboard safely. Master Gottfried C. Krull commended his crew on their actions, stating, "In my opinion the crew of the Huntsville did an outstanding job. From the sound of the first signal the entire crew turned to and assisted where necessary. They complied with the tradition of the sea, 'To Help Their Fellow Seamen in Distress.' "

The Huntsville will receive the distinctive Ship Safety Award Pennant as well as a framed citation. In addition, certificates will be awarded to each member of the crew. □

SECOND TRY: Able Seaman William Paczoch commanded the workboat that went to the rescue of both the would-be rescuers and the Fiona C. crew.

"Let's put the cards on the table . . ."



"It has been a fabulous education as far as I am concerned."

The following interview with Rear Adm. John D. Gavan, U.S. Navy ready reserve, covers subjects ranging from the role of the reservist in a peacetime Navy to the future of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

The admiral entered the Navy in August of 1941 and was assigned to the USS Saratoga as an aviator and gunnery officer. Also assigned to the Saratoga was Rear Adm. John D. Chase, then an ensign fresh from the academy and now commander of Military Sealift Command. Rear Admiral Gavan has served in a number of commands and ships, always as an aviator. Among his many decorations and awards is the Navy Cross, awarded for gallantry during World War II.

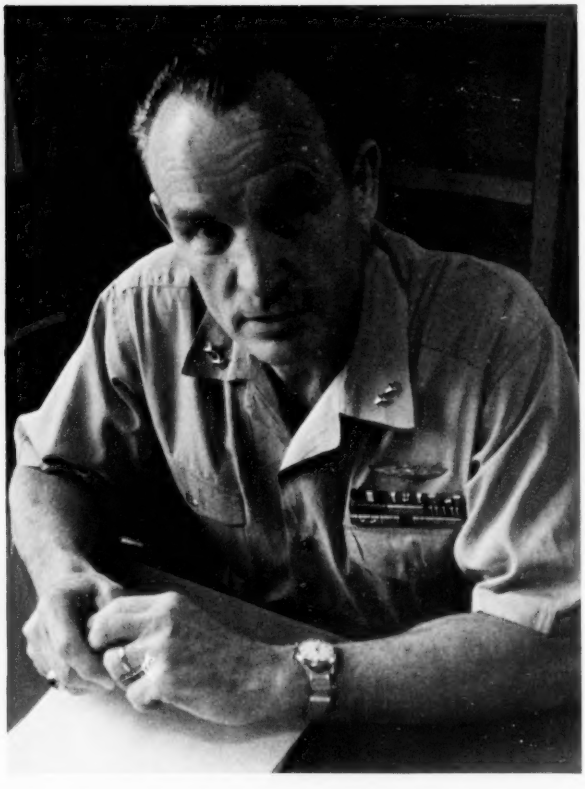
Admiral Gavan served as commander of Military Sealift Command, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean during a recent logistics exercise staged at Camp Pickett, Virginia called Logex.

Entering his rather sparsely furnished office in a World War II temporary building, I was greeted by an amiable and witty man. Admiral Gavan was working on a pile of papers which was summarily brushed aside to make room for recording devices dragged in for the occasion. Admiral Gavan settled back in his chair, eager to discuss the subject he loves most, the U.S. Navy.

SEALIFT: *Admiral, your training during your Navy career was in the field of aviation. You are new to MSC; how are you adjusting?*

GAVAN: Let's put the cards on the table, I have been an aviator and that doesn't necessarily lend itself to expertise in the field of logistics. Being conscious of that, I asked the surface division in Dallas, my home, if they had an

"Anybody who doesn't think this is realistic is out of his cotton-pickin' mind."



MSC office there. They had both an MSC office and an NCSORG office. I spent some time there being briefed on how this operation functions. They then supplied me with a truckload of reading material about MSC. I tried to assimilate it before I got here, in two days. I learned the language; but as far as understanding the program, this has come from the association I have had with the officers participating here. It has been a fabulous education as far as I am concerned.

SEALIFT: To that point then, sir, do you believe that an operation such as Logex is a viable means of communicating ideas and developing techniques? Is it related to what these gentlemen might do in a wartime situation?

GAVAN: Anybody who doesn't think this is realistic is out of his cotton-pickin' mind. This has got to be realistic, because this is what happens. Unless we know all the options we have in a contingency situation, which could happen at any time, or if we didn't try an option during an exercise to see if it works, we might make a mistake when a lot more than just a game is at stake. Logex is a vital operation, particularly for people like me, who haven't been involved in logistics, but who might be in command.

SEALIFT: What would your post be in the event of a war?

GAVAN: I would be chief of staff for the Naval Air Forces, Pacific.

SEALIFT: Which couldn't operate without logistical support from MSC?

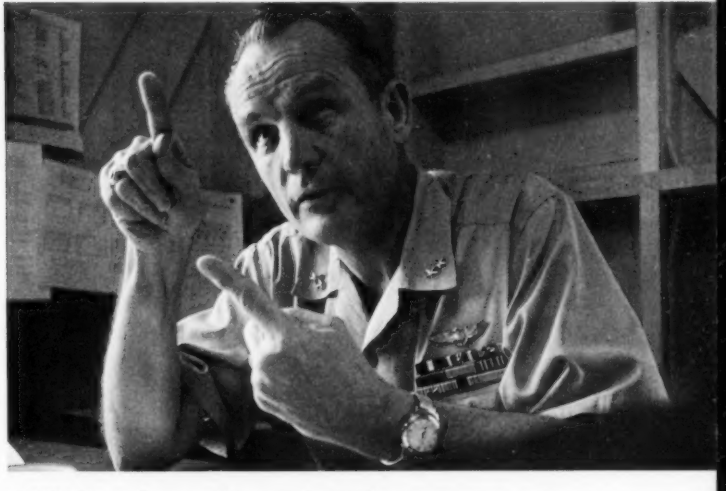
GAVAN: Nuclear ships can go for a long time, but they must be supplied. No way around it. Jet aircraft burn fuel and sailors eat food and these things are vital, regardless of where you are. This is what makes it so important that the Navy participate in this type of exercise. The Army sort of just steps over the oceans. They say, well, we were in the U.S. and now we are in Europe or Africa and we have our supplies and away we go. I think—now, in this exercise—they're finding it isn't that simple. They're learning that they get their supplies through our ships. This has been very educational to them. Our Navy people have impressed me very much with the knowledge they have in doing this type of job.

SEALIFT: Sir, you hold a responsible position as manager of a major life insurance company which I am sure occupies a good deal of your time. Why, then, are you in the Navy reserve?

GAVAN: I do have a high position in the civilian community. My office is on the 27th floor. Seriously though, once you have served in this Navy, you can't run away from it. There is something that gets in your blood. Each reservist left the active Navy for one or more reasons, but we really never got out of the Navy. We stay with it, somehow. We are vitally concerned about it, and love every minute of it. The day I leave the Navy probably will be the day they say the Requiem Mass over my grave.

SEALIFT: What function does the Navy reservist play in maintaining national security?

"In a nuclear confrontation, we aren't going to need any reserve because there wouldn't really be anything left."



GAVAN: In a nuclear confrontation, we are not going to need any reserve because there really wouldn't be anything left. But, in a conventional war, you couldn't sustain a major effort for any length of time before you would have 'o rely on reserve forces. The peacetime military has been cut back to such a degree that you really don't have the manpower.

SEALIFT: So the citizen soldier or citizen sailor is a very responsible part of our total defense?

GAVAN: He has to be. We don't have total defense without him. That, of course, leads to the fact that his value is limited unless he is adequately trained, adequately armed, and on the ready.

SEALIFT: Is he?

GAVAN: That's a good question. That is what we're finding out in this exercise.

SEALIFT: Do you think that the regular Navy is giving all the help it should to the reserves—in regard to training?

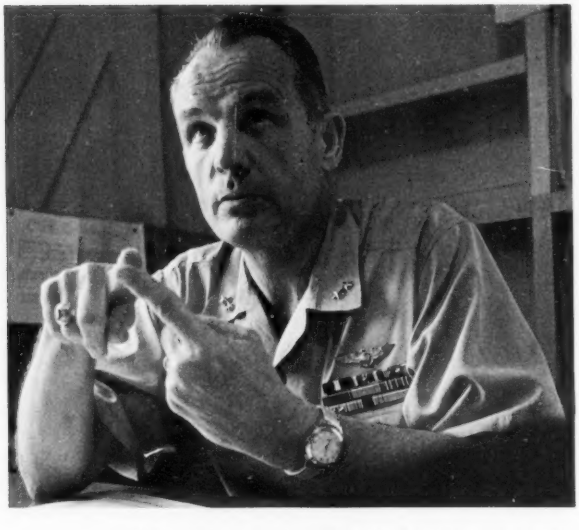
GAVAN: Let's face facts. The regular Navy has far more to do today than it can possibly do.

Now, if you are suggesting they, at the same time, should be training reservists, I would as a fleet commander find this almost impossible. There are ships, crewed by reservists, which sail with the fleet, but I don't think that the regular Navy should be tasked with all training. Training should be done by reservists themselves.

SEALIFT: *Admiral, the Liberian Merchant fleet is the largest in the world. The Russian fleet, made up almost entirely of ships that are less than 10 years, is fifth largest, and the U.S. merchant fleet, with many World War II vintage ships, is seventh. I should add that that figure includes the ships in the National Defense Reserve Fleet. From your very brief acquaintance with MSC, do you have any suggestions for improvement of the maritime situation?*

GAVAN: U.S. ships have to sail at a profit. The Russians don't. The U.S. Merchant Marine is an economic venture. The Russian fleet is economic, military and political. The Russians don't really have to import a lot of items by sea. They have an abundance of raw materials at their fingertips, in their own vast nation and satellite countries. The

"U.S. ships have to sail at a profit. The Russians don't."



U.S. must import 69 of the 72 materials listed as being essential to the economy, wholly or in part. You talk about the fleet in reserve on the James River, but we're fooling ourselves that we have a reserve fleet. It's the difference in the economics that make the difference in the merchant marines.

SEALIFT: *U.S. import of natural resources, and the fact that the Russians had to come to the U.S. to get wheat to feed her people, might bring one to the conclusion that the major*

powers are consuming essential resources faster than they can find them. This would seem to put an even greater pressure on the merchant fleets, not only of the U.S., but of the world. Do you think that the U.S. merchant fleet will be able to meet that challenge?

GAVAN: There's no question about it. It not only gives the merchant marine a challenge, but it gives the Navy a considerable challenge. One of the world's major sources of oil is the Middle East. Most of that oil is shipped out of the Gulf of Aqaba. If that source were blockaded, who would need to fire a shot to bring the world to a screeching halt? There is no enemy approaching your shores but your factories shut down, your farm machinery doesn't run, we aren't shipping wheat to anyone. Without oil, without gas, without power, we have no economy. And without an economy we have no nation to run. I don't think very many people understand the basic problems of the merchant marine in moving products back and forth, or are aware of the requirement for a strong Navy fleet to make sure those ships sail unimpeded. That's the dual problem we all share.

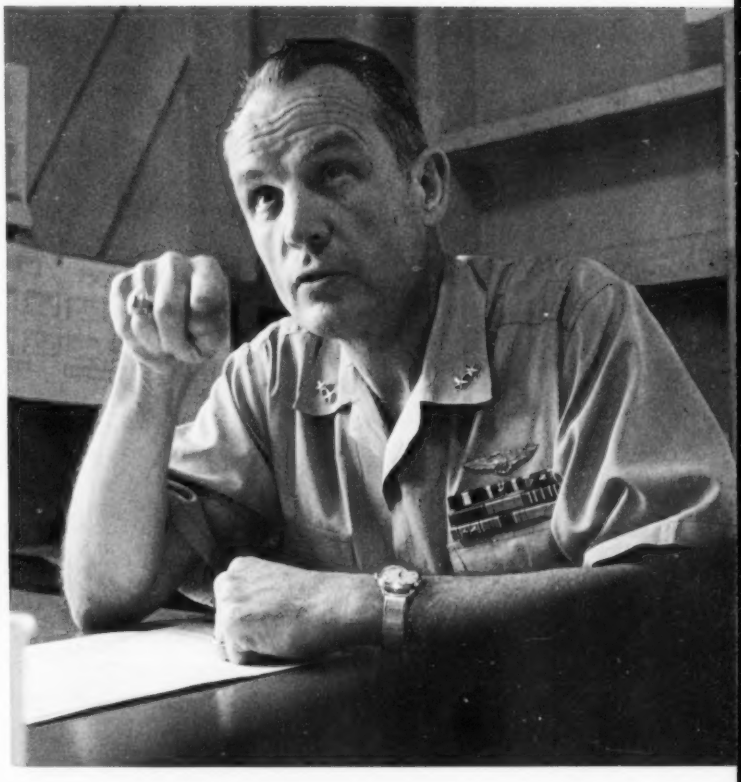
"If the sources of oil were blockaded, who would have to fire a shot to bring the world to a screeching halt?"

SEALIFT: Any answers?

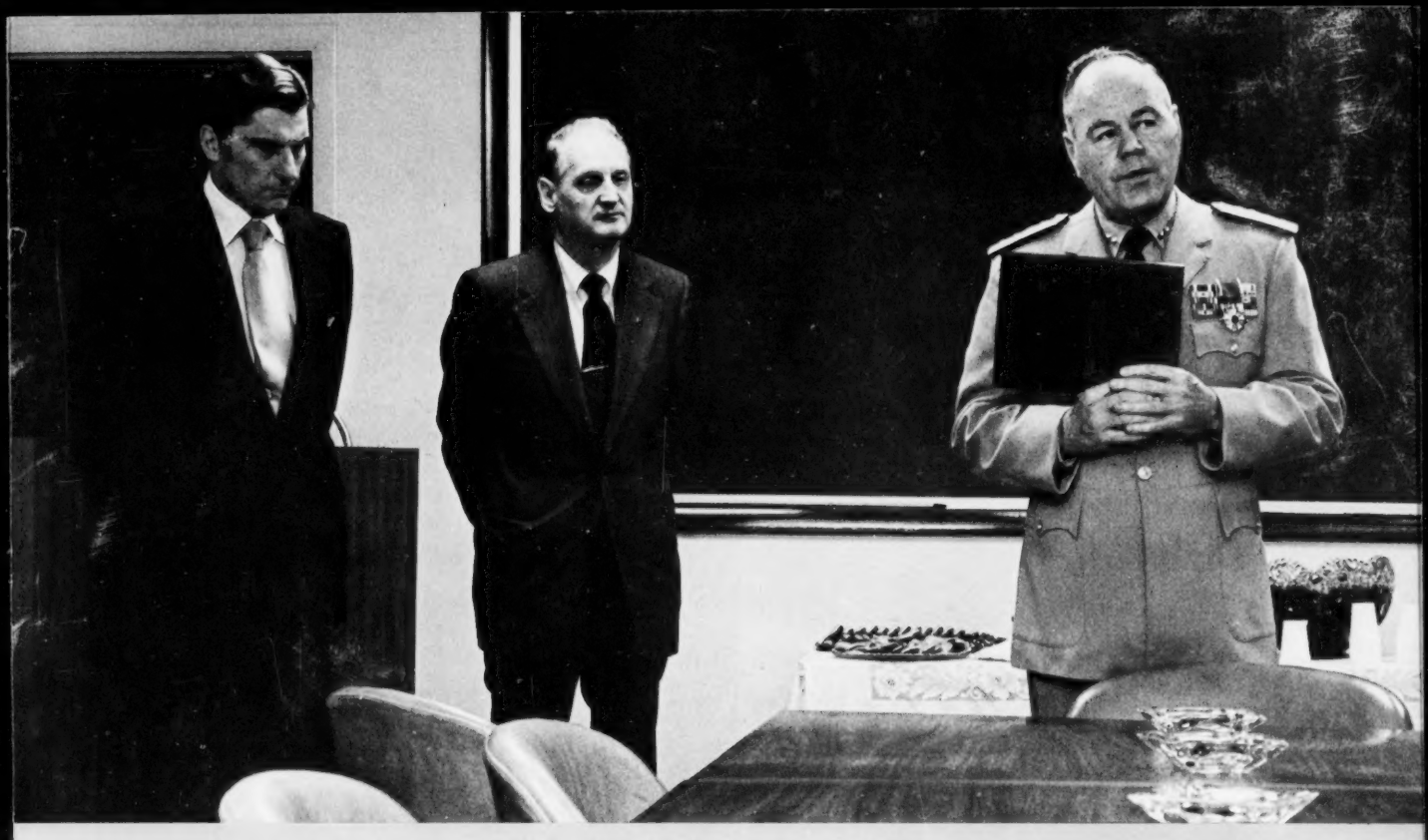
GAVAN: They all cost money, but we must have a modern merchant marine.

SEALIFT: Subsidized by the government?

GAVAN: Let me repeat, we must have it. How we get it is secondary. And, also, for that merchant marine to be worth anything, it must be assured freedom of the seas by a powerful Navy. MSC—and the merchant marine both have quite a job to do. Their work is cut out for them. □



"For the merchant marine to be worth anything, it must be assured the freedom of the seas."



ACCEPTANCE: Rear Adm. John D. Chase told assembled transportation officials that the Legion of Merit awarded him was the result of cooperative effort by all airlift, traffic management and sealift organizations who supported U.S. Forces in Vietnam. Looking on are John W. Warner, Secretary of the Navy, and Robert Carl, from the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Installations and Logistics. The admiral was presented the award by Secretary Warner for outstanding accomplishment as MSC commander.

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